

# ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELs - Test Coordinator Training / FAQs

RIDE hosted a test coordinator training via webinar on December 1, 2021. The recording and slide deck are posted at [www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-training](http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-training). This document contains a compilation of the questions submitted during the training (bolded) and RIDE's responses.

## General / RISAP

### *This Webinar*

**1. Is there a sign-in?**

Your registration and attendance is considered your "sign-in" for this test coordinator webinar.

**2. Will this presentation and recording be available after the training?**

The presentation, recording, and this FAQs document are posted at [www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-training](http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-training) in the "ACCESS for ELLs" section.

**3. How can I access the links from the presentation?**

The presentation will be in PDF form and so all of the links embedded in the slides are clickable.

### *Roles and Responsibilities*

**1. Is anyone employed by the district or school eligible to be a test administrator?**

Being a licensed educator and employed by the district/school are requirements for test administrators. In 2020-2021 ACCESS for ELs administration, due to the unique circumstances resulting from the pandemic, paraprofessionals and teacher assistants were allowed to be trained and certified as test administrators, and those who are certified may do so for the 2021-22 administration as well due to the continuation of the pandemic circumstances. Otherwise, any individuals employed by the district or school who do not hold a state education certification (including student teachers) may only provide support for test administration as proctors, hall monitors, etc. For the distinction between test administrators and proctors, please review the presentation slide deck.

**2. Who can administer Kindergarten ACCESS?**

Any certified educator or administrator, including MLL certified teachers, may be trained and complete the courses and quizzes to become certified and administer the ACCESS assessment.

### *Training*

**1. If I am a returning test administrator, how often do I need to take the training courses, knowledge checks, and appropriate quizzes?**

Any test administrator who will be scoring a Speaking domain (Kindergarten, Paper, Alternate) must recertify annually. Otherwise, recertification is required every three years or upon adoption of a new



tool (new screener or assessment). You can check your certification report in the WIDA Secure Portal for the dates of your last trainings and certifications.

**2. Where do we find the quizzes in the WIDA portal?**

In order to take a quiz, test administrators need to enroll in and complete the related assessment training course.

**3. Where do I find the certification reports?**

If you are a district or school test coordinator and want to generate a report of which personnel in your school or district are certified, you need to login to the WIDA Secure Portal, then click "manage" and then "certification report." There is a screenshot in the slide deck showing what that looks like.

**4. For 2nd and 3rd grade teachers, do they have to take both the online and paper test since writing is done on paper?**

ACCESS for ELs for students in grades 1-3 is considered an online test even though there is a paper component for writing – this is different than the accommodation “paper test” which is what the “paper test” training is for. Test administrators giving those grade level tests should take the online training course as default, and only take the paper test if they will be administering a paper version of the full test to a student who has that test format documented as an accommodation.

**5. The term “NDUA” is noted in the teacher test certification report and in the CSV file for an “NDUA date”. What does NDUA refer to?**

NDUA means “Non-Disclosure and User Agreement” and is what all users must sign when accessing the portal. It is essentially an affirmation of test security where users attest that they will follow proper procedures to administer the test and keep the test, content, and student-related or any other secure information confidential.

## *Test Security / Monitoring Visits*

**1. What is the format for the affirmation of test security?**

The affirmation of test security is part of the WIDA training when you sign the security agreement, or NDUA (Non-Disclosure and User Agreement) through the WIDA Secure Portal upon login.

**2. Do test irregularities include inadequate testing conditions, such as if a testing site is noisy, or people going in and out, or not a distinct testing location?**

Yes. Testing locations should be chosen and set up so that students have an uninterrupted, quiet, and productive testing experience, and to maintain the security of students’ work and the test content itself. Environments that do not meet those criteria (e.g., noise, unauthorized personnel entering and leaving or passing through) would be considered a testing irregularity, as noted in the slide deck.

**3. We have integrated classrooms. Due to lack of staffing we are not able to pull out MLLs to test and due to COVID we cannot mix classrooms, so can general education students stay in the room working on a quiet activity while the MLL students are taking ACCESS for ELLs?**

Generally, no. It is critical to provide appropriate test conditions that encourage students to do their best on and feel comfortable taking the ACCESS test. If you have questions about the testing environment, please reach out to RIDE well in advance of testing to discuss options.



4. **For the testing environment, should educational materials that are posted on the walls or visible on shelves or throughout the room be removed or covered up?**

If the visible materials or posters pertain to the subject being tested and could give students an advantage on the test, yes. For example, if a teacher were administering a state science assessment in a science classroom, all science-related materials would need to be removed or covered, but if the same assessment were administered in an ELA classroom, it is less likely much would need to change.

5. **If our school is selected for a monitoring visit, when would we be notified by RIDE? Are visits announced?**

RIDE will email the test coordinator(s) associated with that school and district before the state testing window opens in order to schedule a pre-visit conference call and also work with the school to determine the date when the monitoring visit will occur.

6. **How do we know who is notified to plan these visits? What if the test coordinator for the school is not the principal?**

RIDE will email the school test coordinator and CC the district test coordinator. If the school test coordinator is not the principal, the principal will also be CC'd. RIDE will use the information provided by districts [through the eRIDE School Directory](#) as the basis for who to contact. Please ensure that whoever is the school testing coordinator has the *role* "School Testing Coordinator" visible as that is RIDE's primary reference. If there are more than one school testing coordinator, or that is differentiated by state assessment (e.g., "ACCESS School Test Coordinator" vs "DLM School Test Coordinator" vs "RICAS School Test Coordinator"), it may be helpful to customize the individual's "title" accordingly. District data managers have access to update all profiles for their district's schools, so if you do not have access to do so, please check with them.

7. **What is the purpose of monitoring visits taking place on test days?**

Visits serve multiple purposes. Visits are one way RIDE fulfills the federal requirement to ensure that all state assessments are being administered properly, as that is critical for assessment results to be considered reliable and valid across administration years. The visits also provide an individualized opportunity for schools to ask questions and discuss administration and coordination with RIDE prior to testing. Schools can also provide feedback about the test administration process to RIDE, or indicate where further guidance would be welcome.

## *Student Participation*

1. **Are all Rhode Island schools required to administer testing online, except for K and 1-3 writing?**

Yes, the default is an online (computer-based) test for all grades for the ACCESS for ELs assessment except Kindergarten. The grades 1-3 writing domain is still considered to be part of the "online" test even though students will submit their writing responses on paper (handwriting), whereas grades 4-12 submit responses online (keyboarding). The only other exceptions are when 1) the school has a pre-approved waiver from RIDE to allow an entirely paper-based administration, or 2) particular students have a documented accommodation in their IEP or 504 plan requiring paper format testing.

2. **Are there any requirements to determine if a paper test is given or an online test? How do we know which training video to complete?**



All students in grades 1-12 are expected to take the test on computer unless they have an accommodation that requires paper testing or their school has an approved waiver to administer paper tests. Test administrators administering ACCESS for ELLs for grades 1-12 should take the “online” training video, and only take the “paper” training video if they will be administering a paper test accommodation or if their school has received a waiver.

- 3. Last year if a newcomer arrived at any time during the testing window, they needed to be tested. Is this the same for this year?**

Yes, the testing policy is the same as last year.

- 4. What students take the Alternate ACCESS for ELs assessment?**

Any MLL student in any grade (1-12) who meets the criteria for eligibility for our alternate assessment (Dynamic Learning Maps, or DLM, which only begins testing in third grade), is eligible for the Alternate ACCESS for ELs. Students who do not meet the DLM eligibility criteria are not allowed to take the Alternate ACCESS for ELs assessment.

- 5. What about MLL students in grades 1-2 who are identified as special education students and have a significant cognitive disability?**

RIDE provides guidance about identifying students in the early grades in our eligibility handbook for DLM which is posted at [www.ride.ri.gov/DLM](http://www.ride.ri.gov/DLM). If you have further questions, please contact Heather Heineke directly at 222-8493.

## ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Suite of Assessments

### *Before Testing*

- 1. Will RIDE be providing the letters to families like last year?**

The letter from the Commissioner that RIDE provided last year encouraged families of the many students utilizing remote or distance learning to participate in the in-school assessments, and that is no longer the case this year as there are only very few students in that situation.

- 2. How do we get logins for AMS? Who do we contact?**

If you do not have a login for the WIDA AMS, please see the “Logging In” section of your WIDA member/state page (“Rhode Island” through the drop down on the [WIDA website](http://WIDA website)). The WIDA Client Services Center can also assist you – their contact information is provided in this slide deck’s “Resources” section.

- 3. How can we ensure that school site addresses are correct?**

Login to your WIDA AMS account. As school or district test coordinator, in the “Materials” menu you should be able to review the address for the materials shipment (see page 46 of the WIDA AMS User Guide). If the information is not correct, please update it, and please also review and update your school (or district, as applicable) profile in the [eRIDE School Directory](http://eRIDE School Directory) as that is the source for the organization information which RIDE pre-loads into the system.



4. **When should the ACCESS for ELs materials shipment be expected?**

Delivery is scheduled for 12/21/21. If your school will be closed that day, you need to reach out as soon as possible to DRC to request shipment for a different day.

5. **For out of district placements, will materials be shipped to the district that student is from?**

Yes, the sending districts will receive the testing materials for their outplacement students. Sending districts are responsible to securely deliver those materials to the outplacement locations.

6. **Where can we find the link for the practice sessions for students?**

The link for the practice sessions for students can be found in this presentation's slide deck (slide 93), as well as on the Online Test Checklist posted at [www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-manuals](http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-manuals).

7. **Are students allowed to break for lunch and resume testing, or do testing sections need to be administered in one session in a testing day?**

Test sessions should be completed in a single "sitting" in one day. RIDE recommends scheduling sessions to avoid conflicts with recess or lunch.

8. **Do the student have access to paper to write and analyze questions?**

Yes, you can provide scratch paper to students.

9. **Can we administer Reading first and then Listening?**

Listening and Reading must be administered first, either back-to-back or in separate sessions; whether Reading or Listening is administered first does not matter. However, both of those must be administered and completed prior to the administration of Writing and Speaking, as students' performance on the Listening and Reading tests will determine their Tier placement for Speaking and Writing.

## *During Testing*

1. **Will students be able to review their spoken response prior to submitting it through the testing platform?**

Unfortunately the platform does not allow for a retake, therefore the recording the student makes will be the scored answer.

2. **Can we shred testing tickets immediately following each session, or does that have to wait until all testing has been completed?**

Yes. Testing tickets are for each domain and can be shredded as the student completes the domain in one sitting.

## *After Testing*

1. **Is there any way to code an exclusionary domain?**

Yes, use the SPD code for students who have a disability that prevents their participation (e.g., deaf student for the Listening domain).

2. **Does a student have to attempt a domain before a 'do not score' code can be used?**

For a 'do not score' code to be used for a student and applied to a particular domain, it has to be stated in that student's IEP or 504 plan that the student is not participating in that domain due to a



disability. If that is the case, the student does not have to attempt the test before the code can be entered.

3. **Can forms containing student information (e.g., medical exemptions) be emailed rather than faxed?**

No. The forms contain students' personally identifiable information (PII) which must be always kept confidential and secure in accordance with federal law, and email is not a secure form of communication for a variety of reasons but particularly its transmissibility. Never send screenshots, forms, or text that contain students' PII via email – the only information which may be transmitted via email is a student's SASID, school, and grade so long as no other identifiable information is included anywhere else in the email thread. If you cannot fax a form to RIDE and need to use an online method of transfer, please email [assessment@ride.ri.gov](mailto:assessment@ride.ri.gov) and we will send you a link to our secure portal where you can upload the file.

## Accommodations and Accessibility Features

1. **Can you please provide some clarity regarding accommodations and which students can receive them? Would it be accurate to say that a student who *does not have an IEP or 504 plan* cannot have an accommodation sheet completed for them by the test administrator? For example, if a student receives instruction in a “small group”, does that automatically mean the student will receive a “small group” accommodation for the ACCESS for ELs assessment?**

Accommodations are only for students with an IEP or 504 plan, and must be documented on that plan in order to be administered on a state assessment. An instructional practice is not automatically allowable as an accommodation, especially if a student does not have an IEP or 504 plan: accommodations are specific to assessment. There is overlap of some test supports that may be similar to or the same as instructional supports, so it is possible that a student with a small group instructional support could also have a small group assessment/test support documented in their IEP/504 plan. If you have questions about a particular accommodation or accessibility feature after reviewing the AAF Manual at [www.ride.ri.gov/accommodations](http://www.ride.ri.gov/accommodations), please contact Heather Heineke at 222-8493.

2. **What should LEAs do if they think a student might need a domain exemption due to a documented disability?**

Please contact Emily Klein at 222-8985 or Heather Heineke at 222-8493 if you have questions about documented disabilities and participation in related domains for ACCESS for ELLs.

3. **Is there a “human reader” accommodation that can be used with the online test?**

Yes, please review the Accommodations and Accessibility Features Manual and the ACCESS-specific accommodations document posted at [www.ride.ri.gov/Accommodations](http://www.ride.ri.gov/Accommodations) for more information.

4. **Can ACCESS for ELLs be administered in a non-school setting to students who have test anxiety but do not have an IEP or 504 plan?**

No. All accommodations must be documented and included a student's IEP or 504 plan. If you have questions about other test supports that might help alleviate the student's anxiety, please contact Heather Heineke at 222-8493. As a reminder, preparation and practice is key to ensuring students are confident and comfortable when taking state assessments (e.g., practice test, tutorials, simulating a test using released items, gaining familiarity with the testing platform).



## Resources

1. Where is the RIDE directory (School Directory) located?

The landing page is [www.ride.ri.gov/School-Directory](http://www.ride.ri.gov/School-Directory), and the direct link is

[http://www2.ride.ri.gov/Applications/MasterDirectory/Organization\\_Default.aspx](http://www2.ride.ri.gov/Applications/MasterDirectory/Organization_Default.aspx). In order to change the directory, a user needs to login through eRIDE. For assistance, please contact the eRIDE Help Desk.

## Lessons Learned from the 2020-21 ACCESS for ELs Administration

The following are what participants submitted through the “question” or “chat” feature during the discussion portion of the training focusing on lessons learned from the 2020-21 ACCESS for ELs administration. These submissions supplement what was shared verbally and is audible on the recording.

- Do not wait! A student might be out later for medical reasons.
- Cut test tickets in advance!
- Start testing on day one!
- Leave plenty of time for make ups.
- Last year, it was difficult to schedule students who were in Distance Learning situations.
- Provide incentives (i.e., nice breakfast if possible ) on test days! Give students individual space for speaking test.
- We had about one or two students each session who took longer than expected, but were working productively, so planning for those occasions ahead of time will be helpful.
- Group students for speaking in tiers: tier A takes less time than tier B/C.
- We always try to make sure students know ahead of time what days they are testing so that they are present and so teachers know when the students will be missing class.
- Test the headphones and mics!!